The line was earmarked for closure as part of the Beeching cuts. The decline of this section of railway started in the late 1950s and was built by the Tees Valley Railway company during 1868 with the railway line from Barnard Castle to Middleton-in-Teesdale. But if you choose to walk it is possible to make shorter circular sections. This guide has been written as a linear route, the route follows the railway path, bridleways and tracks, the railway path is well maintained and is managed by Durham County Council countryside section (tel: 0191 372 9100). The route is mainly flat with a few sharp climbs and descents. Please be sure to leave gates as you find them, keep dogs under close control and follow the Countryside Code. The route start is close to Barnard Castle, although you can pick up the line that serviced the stone quarrying industry in the dales. The Sheep farming industry has its own vocabulary, with terms such as Gimmer Ewe (a female sheep that has not yet had offspring), and the best mix of qualities to produce much of the lamb we eat is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a characteristic breed found in Teesdale (Barry Stacey/Natural England). 

**Route Introduction**

This route takes you along the old railway line that serviced the stone quarrying industry in the dales. The route start is close to Barnard Castle, although you can pick up the route at a number of points along the way to take the route in shorter sections. This guide has been written as a linear route but if you choose to walk it is possible to make shorter circular walks connecting up with other footpaths including the Teesdale Way.

The majority of the path is along the old railway line. The section of the railway line from Barnard Castle to Middleton in Teesdale was built by the Tees Valley Railway company during 1868 with stops at Cotherstone, Mickleton and Ronaldkirk. There are two major engineering features on the line the Limestone and Baledersdale Viaducts. You will pass over both these on this route. The decline of this section of railway started in the late 1950s and the line was earmarked for closure as part of the Beeching cuts in April 1965.

**Terrain**

- The route follows the railway path, bridleways and tracks, the railway path is well maintained and is managed by Durham County Council countryside section (tel: 0191 372 9100).
- The route is mainly flat with a few sharp climbs and descents. Please be sure to leave gates as you find them, keep dogs under close control and follow the Countryside Code.

**Public Transport**

- There is a regular bus service between Barnard Castle and Middleton-in-Teesdale.
- For timetable information call Traveline on 0871 200 2233 or log on to www.traveline.info.

**Useful Maps**

- 1:25,000 O/L31 North Pennines

**Food, Farming and the Environment**

- Farming plays a major role in the landscape character of Teesdale from Barnard Castle to Middleton. As you follow the route of the old railway line, the land around you is dominated by sheep farms, with some beef herds.
- The Northern sheep breeds such as Swaledale are the breeding stock for much of the lamb produced in the UK. Traditionally the ewes of the hill breeds are crossed with rams from breeds such as the Bluefaced Leicester to produce a ‘mule’ ewe (cross breed) that has the best mix of qualities to produce much of the lamb we eat.

The Sheep farming industry has its own vocabulary, with terms such as Gimmer Ewe (a female sheep that has not yet had offspring), Tup (a breeding male ram) and Shering (a lamb up to its first shearing). The Farming industry is a cornerstone of communities in areas like Teesdale and plays a large part in shaping the landscape and economy of the North Pennines as a whole. Farming is a big part of the celebrations in the dales, with a number of agricultural shows throughout the summer.

Much of the farming in Teesdale is carried out in balance with the environment, through government stewardship schemes, working with conservation organisations and generations of custodians and good husbandry of the land. Much of the higher ground in Teesdale is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Site of Special Scientific Interest in recognition of its high landscape value and diverse wildlife.

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**Map**

This leaflet was produced by the North Pennines AONB Partnership on behalf of the Love Food Project. Printed on 100% recycled paper: please re-use and recycle.

**Love Food Project**

This guide has been compiled or reared food in Teesdale, Barnard Castle to Middleton-in-Teesdale, Weardale, The Allen Valleys and Derwentside.

**North Pennines**

This guide has been written by the Love Food Project, which supports the production, promotion, use and appreciation of locally grown or reared food in Teesdale, Weardale, The Allen Valleys and Derwentside.
Section 1: Barnard Castle to Romaldkirk

Length: 6 miles (9.7 km)  
Grid Ref: NZ 04696 16583

Begin the route at Deepdale, parking can be found in the layby at the top of the bank on the B6277. Go through the gate and follow the route alongside the river Tees. Follow the path along the left hand bank of the river. At the next gate follow the track and you climb up the hill sticking to the track that rises up on your left hand side. At the top of the hill follow the bridleway through the fields past Pecknell Farm and once you pass the Lartington Estate Farm buildings turn right and take the track underneath the railway line. Go through the next two fields and re-join the railway line by following the bridleway markers pointing to your left and continue down into Cotherstone.

There is a steep descent at the end of the railway line to join the road at Cotherstone, horse riders will need to dismount. An alternative route can be taken by choosing the bridleway straight ahead when re-joining the railway line, travel through the fields and then turn right to continue down the road towards Cotherstone. At Cotherstone Village, then take the left hand turn signposted to Bowes. For a food stop, continue through the village to the second green and to the Fox and Hounds Pub. On the road up to Bowes continue out of the village until you reach the railway line crossing point, turn right onto the line. At this point the railway path becomes flat and wide, only interspersed with dips for crossings and gates. Follow the railway line across the river Balder (horse riders must dismount) and into Romaldkirk Village. The charming Rose and Crown pub in the village serves food.

Section 2: Romaldkirk to Middleton-in-Teesdale

Length: 4 miles (6.4 km)  
Grid Ref: NY 9945 2202

In Romaldkirk village take the first left at the village green and go up the road to re-join the railway path. There is a sharp climb and a very steep descent at this point. Follow the railway track to Mickleton, at this point you can take a track down to Middleton village if you wish to divert to The Crown at Mickleton for a welcome pit stop.

Continue past Mickleton and cross the impressive viaduct over the river Lune and then continue to the end of the railway line. Turn left and go along the road (take care) to Middleton-in-Teesdale. There are a wealth of cafes and pubs in Middleton to enjoy a hearty meal or tea and cake at the end of the route. There is a regular bus service that runs to Barnard Castle to return to the starting point for those who have chosen to walk the route, the more energetic could return to Barnard Castle along the route of the Teesdale Way and be rewarded with lovely river views.

Food Highlights

**MIDDLETON-IN-TEESDALE CAFÉS**  
The Conduit Café, Bridge Street (01833 640717)  
Café 1618, Market Place (01833 640300)  
Café Caramel, Market Place (01833 640924)  
The Dining Room, Bridge Street (01833 640283)  
Rumours Coffee Shop, Chapel Row (01771 722491)

**MIDDLETON-IN-TEESDALE PUBS**  
The Forsters Arms, Market Place (01833 641435)  
The Teesdale Hotel, Market Place (01833 640260)  
The Bridge Inn, Bridge Street (01833 640283)

**COTHERSTONE PUBS**  
The Fox and Hounds, West Green (01833 650241)

**ROMALDKIRK PUBS**  
The Rose & Crown (01833 650213)

**MICKLETON PUBS**  
The Crown (01833 640381)